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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EDUCATION SECRETARY SPELLING'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT OF ICELAND

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¶1. (SBU) On October 3, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings held a short bilateral exchange with President of the Republic of Iceland Olafur Grimsson on the margins of the Special Olympics Global Policy Summit on the Well-being of People with Intellectual Disabilities. The meeting was at President Grimsson's request, in his capacity as an international board member of Special Olympics. Grimsson was accompanied by Special Olympics Chairman Timothy Shriver.

¶3. (SBU) Speaking on behalf of the international board members of Special Olympics, Grimsson thanked Secretary Spellings and President Bush for their support for the organization. He said that, as the Chinese have recently discovered through hosting the summer games, association with the Special Olympics is a very good investment in international goodwill. Grimsson noted that although Special Olympics is an international organization, it is inseparable from America, with its headquarters in the United States and its close association with the Kennedy-Shriver family. Grimsson said it is among the best manifestations of what the United States represents and while not a U.S. "propaganda machine," Special Olympics is perhaps the only such global organization with such close ties to the United States.

¶4. (SBU) Given the unique global impact of the Special Olympics, Grimsson urged the Administration and Congress to provide stronger long-term support for the organization. Shriver echoed those sentiments. Specifically, he asked that Special Olympics received the full funding allowed under the Sports Empowerment Act. He also complimented Secretary Spellings for her announcement, in her remarks earlier that day at the Global Policy Summit, to commit USD 1.5 million to create a center to help colleges and universities develop and expand programs for students with intellectual disabilities. He described this as an important step.

¶5. (SBU) Secretary Spellings thanked President Grimsson for his comments and said she will convey his thanks, and request for additional support, back to the President and the U.S. Congress.

¶6. (U) Participants

U.S. Side: Secretary Spellings, Consul General Kenneth Jarrett, Susan Berchelmann (Department of Education), and notetaker Joshua Harman.

Iceland Side: President Grimsson and two staff assistants.

Special Olympics: Chairman Timothy Shriver.

¶7. (U) This message was cleared by the Spellings's delegation.

KJARRETT